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East Timor Independence Committee (ETIC)

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PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE

URGENT : Timorese Crosses and Easter Candle Removed Again

Dated : 3rd May, 1992

The East Timor Independence Committee deeply regrets the latest moves by Senator Gareth Evans to stifle freedom of expression in Australia.

Christian crosses and an Easter candle erected in memory of the victims of the Dili massacre by the East Timorese community on public land outside the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra had again been removed late this afternoon.

"Although we thought a compromised had been reached in a meeting between us and the Foreign Affairs Minister on 25th April, Senator Evans made the order before our community could meet. We understood then that he would withhold action until the community could made a decision. Although he knew we were meeting on Friday May 1st, Senator Evans issued the certificate requiring the Federal Police to remove all crosses and the candle. This provocative act may please the Indonesian Government, but it will not draw us into conflict with police.

"We are convinced that Senator Evans wants to show the Indonesian Government that he has as much muscle as the military Commanders in Dili, who have been brutally preventing our people the freedom of expression."

"We are now receiving the same repression at the hands of Australia's Foreign Minister Gareth Evans as our people are suffering in East Timor."

Ines Almeida, spokesperson for the East Timorese community also said, "The Australian Government's policy of appeasement towards Jakarta's Generals will do great damage to Australia's future. Senator Evans's grovelling with his latest act will earn him even greater respect in Jakarta. Australia is already losing its reputation in the eyes of the many Governments throughout the world which continue to support our struggle for self-determination, justice and liberty."

"The genocide committed against us will continue. The Indonesian Military Regime can feel confident that it will attract no further criticism from the 'boot lickers' in Canberra", added Ms Almeida.

Contact: Ines Almeida, on ph: (02) 823 4109 (h)

EDITORS NOTE

She also said, Senator Evans has also decided to appeal our successful court action. Our legal advisers will be seeking further directions from the Federal Court to determine whether Senator Evans has behaved properly in acting as he has while his own appeal is outstanding. "Apparently he thinks he is above the Courts as well".

For further inquiry about legal proceedings, please contact Mr Bernard Collaery on (06) 239 6919 (w) or (06) 239 6239 (h).